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Letter dated 8 September 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to my report of 18 August 2006 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/670), in which I informed the Security Council of the need to reinforce the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) with a range of specific capabilities, including a maritime unit for patrolling the coastline.

I should like to inform you that, in accordance with paragraphs 11 (f) and 14 of resolution 1701 (2006), we have received a request from the Government of Lebanon for assistance with the monitoring and patrolling of the Lebanese territorial waters. I am pleased to inform you that a group of Member States, comprising France, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, have agreed to provide assistance for this purpose on an interim basis. The deployment of these interim naval forces, which are led by Italian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Giuseppe De Giorgi, was a prerequisite for the lifting of the naval blockade imposed on Lebanon. UNIFIL has established a naval operations centre at its headquarters in Naqoura to coordinate all operational details with the relevant authorities.

In the meantime, preparations for the deployment of a full naval task force under the command of UNIFIL are proceeding. It is anticipated that the UNIFIL task force will assume the responsibilities currently discharged by the naval forces of the Member States referred to above as soon as it can be assembled, on the basis of mutually agreed working arrangements with the Lebanese authorities.

I should be grateful if you would bring this information to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. **Annan**

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